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Girls under the age of 18 in deprived areas are seven times more likely to get pregnant than those in the wealthiest areas, new figures have revealed.

ISD Scotland published teenage pregnancy statistics today, which showed a general reduction across the board in recent years.

However, the rich-poor divide remains stark. According to the data, 40.2 in every 1000 under 18s in the most deprived areas got pregnant in 2015.

That compares to just 5.7 in every 1000 for the least deprived girls.

And while most health boards recorded a decrease in teenage pregnancies generally, rates went up in both NHS Ayrshire and Arran and NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“It’s extremely worrying that the social background of under 18 girls is so influential when it comes to the likelihood of their getting pregnant. “

The fact that risk increases seven-fold from the wealthiest to the poorest areas should be a wake-up call.

“Of course, it’s welcome to see teenage pregnancy rates in general decrease.

“And it’s also worth noting, particularly at the older end of the scale, many of these pregnancies will have been planned and result in happy family lives.

“But we can’t neglect the fact that more needs to be done to help those younger teenagers in some of Scotland’s most deprived areas.

“An unplanned pregnancy at that age can be emotionally damaging and have a very serious impact on life chances.

“I hope the Scottish Government looks at these figures and sets out what it intends to do to close this gap.”

To see the full ISD Scotland report, visit:

<https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Sexual-Health/Publications/2017-07-04/2017-07-04-TeenPreg-Report.pdf>

The report stated that an under 18 girl from the most deprived area was seven times more likely to get pregnant than one from the least deprived. When considering the under 20 bracket, the gap falls from seven times to five times more likely.